

June 2006

Public Transportation and Rail Division Monthly News

This newsletter highlights the division's progress and milestones in these areas:

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- Public Transportation
- Agency Council on Coordinated Transportation
- Passenger Rail
- Commute Trip Reduction
- Announcements and Upcoming Events

Division News

Workshop Finds Solutions for Ephrata Station

WSDOT's Public Transportation & Rail Division co-hosted the **Crime Prevention through Environmental Design** (CPTED) workshop in Ephrata on May 24-25 with the National Crime Prevention Council.

Participants learned about the principles of CPTED and then assessed the Ephrata Station, a multi-modal facility served by Amtrak, Grant Transit Authority, and Northwestern Trailways.

Because of persistent crime and vandalism at the Ephrata Station, city officials locked the doors after business hours. While eliminating many security problems, this also prevented Amtrak passengers from using the facility after-hours, and on weekends and holidays.

CPTED workshop participants identified alternative solutions - such as enhancing natural surveillance, lighting, and signage - to encourage legitimate use of the facility. The city of Ephrata plans to adopt some of these suggestions and reopen the Ephrata Station for Amtrak customers later this summer.



Workshop participants evaluate alternate security solutions for the Ephrata Station.

Workshop participants included representatives from the Ephrata Chamber of Commerce, Grant Transit Authority, Northwestern Trailways, Ephrata Police, Royal City Public Works, City of Moses Lake, Ephrata School District, City of Ephrata Public Works and WSDOT.

Office of Transit Mobility

Extensive Coordination with Transit Agencies for I-405 Closure June 23-27

With only a few weeks to go before the closure of I-405 northbound near 124th in Kirkland, the I-405 Project Office coordinated their communication plan with the Office of Transit Mobility's (OTM) System Integration team in early May. OTM assembled a multi-agency meeting of transit representatives from Metro, Community Transit, Sound Transit and WSDOT to review the plan and suggest enhancements.

This group discussed the need for early notification to the public of the planned closure. Each member brought their own agency's commitments to help keep the transportation system working during the Friday night through Tuesday morning closure of the mainline of I-405 northbound. In addition to identifying critical issues regarding transit operations, the group also discussed preparations for any other transportation disruptions.

Depending on the weather, the transit agencies are hoping their efforts will keep public transportation moving when construction begins lowering the I-405 northbound lanes by three feet Friday night, June 23, 2006.

Park and Ride Work Group Met May 1

WSDOT's Office of Transit Mobility (OTM) formed a Park and Ride work group to assist in developing a policy which establishes the state's role in park and ride lot planning, development and operations. This work group will function as a subcommittee of the OTM Advisory Committee and will conduct an inventory of the state's park and ride system. The work group plans to meet quarterly to provide input and support as OTM develops the park and ride lot program.

Public Transportation

Grants Program Advisory Committee (G-PAC) Met On May 25

The G-PAC Steering Committee met on May 25 to review the criteria for project selection. They discussed the historical perspective of project selection, the funding perspective, and identifying criteria at both the community/regional level and the state level.

The Steering Committee recommended that the criteria for project selection be closely tied to the purpose of the funding. For the federal dollars, these guidelines are included in several Federal Transit Administration programs. The criteria for the state grant funds from Rural Mobility and Paratransit/Special Needs will be broader.

For more information, visit: www.wsdot.wa.gov/transit/g-pac/default.cfm.

ACCT

ACCT Receives "United We Ride" Grant

The Agency Council on Coordinated Transportation (ACCT) has received a \$50,000 United We Ride State Coordination Implementation Grant from the Federal Transit Administration. ACCT was commended for providing "leadership and achievements in the development of comprehensive strategies to deliver proficient and affordable transportation to everyone in your state."

ACCT plans to use the grant funds to enhance the usability of the statewide travel options Web site (also known as the Trip Planner). These enhancements will provide better access to information for people with low-vision and other special needs. ACCT's proposal and achievements met the objectives of the United We Ride initiative, which includes enhancing coordination of transportation programs for individuals with disabilities, older adults and lower income populations who depend on transportation services to access employment, health and other community services.

For more information about the Agency Council on Coordinated Transportation, please visit: www.wsdot.wa.gov/ACCT/about_acct.htm.

Passenger Rail

Amtrak Cascades to Add New Seattle - Portland Roundtrip in July

Beginning July 1, 2006, Amtrak Cascades will offer an added mid-day roundtrip between Seattle and Portland.

Amtrak Cascades has experienced 11 consecutive years of increasing ridership since service began in 1994.

To accommodate the additional round trip, some Amtrak Cascades train schedules will change. Passengers traveling between communities north and south of Seattle -- such as from Bellingham to Portland -- will have a much shorter layover at King Street Station. This layover time for southbound



Due to growing ridership on Amtrak Cascades, increased service will be added to the Seattle-Portland route beginning July 1, 2006.

passengers will be reduced from 60 to 25 minutes, and for northbound travelers from 90 to 20 minutes.

Also, day-trippers from the North Sound region will gain three more hours in Seattle. They will have nearly eight hours to shop, conduct business, or visit family and friends before their return trip.

Amtrak *Cascades* travels on the Pacific Northwest Rail Corridor, which extends 466 miles from Eugene, Oregon, to Vancouver, British Columbia. Amtrak *Cascades* service is provided in partnership with the states of Washington and Oregon. Visit www.wsdot.wa.gov/Projects/Rail/Passenger/SeattleToPortland/ to learn more.

King Street Station Turns 100



Unveiling the painting commissioned by the King Street Centennial Committee, from left: artist J. Craig Thorpe, Judy Giniger and Ron Sheck

A May 10 celebration of the 100th birthday of Seattle's King Street Station kicked off a series of activities focusing on the past, present and future of rail passenger service.

Other events planned over the 8-week period from May 10 through July 1 include a series of Wednesday Brown Bag lunches offering feature movies, historical film clips, lectures, and special presentations at various Seattle venues.

A special oral history project is collecting memories and experiences of King Street Station and train travel in the Pacific Northwest by members of the public. Highlights will be selected by the Museum of History and Industry and presented as a Readers' Theater at noon and at 6:30 p.m., June 28, at the Seattle Public Library. Additional information is available at www.kingstreetcentennial.org.

Rail traffic at King Street Station, which serves Amtrak intercity trains and Sounder commuter trains, has increased from 6 trains a day in the early 1990s to 26 weekday trains today. WSDOT is working with Amtrak to add an additional Seattle-Portland Amtrak *Cascades* roundtrip on July 1. Sound Transit will add two additional round trips between Everett and Seattle and five additional round trips between Tacoma and Seattle by 2008.

Good Turnout at Stanwood Station Community Meeting

Over 40 people attended the May 9 community meeting on the Stanwood Station project, hosted by WSDOT and the city of Stanwood. Among those attending were Sen. Mary Margaret Haugen, Mayor Dianne White, members of the city council, and members of Design Stanwood, a group responsible for creating and implementing a vision for Stanwood.

WSDOT's Judy Giniger and Kirk Fredrickson attended. Fredrickson presented a summary of the proposed plan for the station and other area improvements. WSDOT will be working with the BNSF railway, Amtrak, the city of Stanwood and others as the planning and design of the facility moves forward this summer.

Commute Options

Update on Commute Trip Reduction Work Group Outreach

As directed by the 2006 state legislature, WSDOT is working with cities, counties, planning organizations and transit systems to develop the modified Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) program. The 2006 state legislature modified the CTR program to enhance its ability to benefit energy conservation, air quality and transportation efficiency. Changes to the program should help integrate trip reduction programs into planning for highways, local growth and development.

WSDOT is in the midst of an ambitious outreach effort to explain program changes to participating cities and counties, regional transportation planning organizations and transit agencies. WSDOT staff and CTR work group members gave 14 presentations on the CTR Efficiency Act in May. Among the target audiences reached are:

- Several Employee Transportation Coordinators from across the state
- The state's six participating regional transportation planning organizations
- Washington Retail Association, Washington Food Industry, and the National Federation of Independent Businesses (Washington Chapter)

- Lead agencies in the program's nine counties
- Participating jurisdictions in Snohomish County

Sign up for e-mail announcements on the CTR program implementation and learn about opportunities to give feedback on the draft rules by visiting: www.wsdot.wa.gov/tdm/taskforce/tfmaterials.cfm#program

WSDOT Employee Receives Diamond Award



From left: Lorena Eng, Robin Hartsell, Pam McInnes, Brian Lagerberg, Azim Sheikh-Taheri and Judy Giniger

Northwest Region employee Pam McInnes won a Diamond award for Outstanding Employee Transportation Coordinator at a May 4 Economic Update breakfast, which was co-hosted by Commuter Challenge and enterpriseSeattle.

McInnes was one of seven individuals and twelve local organizations recognized for their efforts to keep traffic moving by motivating employees to ride or drive with someone else, take the bus, ride a bike, walk, telework, or compress their workweeks.

Worksites participating in the Commute Trip Reduction program remove more than 20,000 vehicles from Washington state's roads each day, 14,280 trips in the Puget Sound region alone. Since the Commute Trip Reduction law took effect in 1993, the drive-alone rate has declined by nearly 7 percent at worksites in the CTR program, from 70.8 percent in 1993 to 65.7 percent in 2005. For more information, please visit

www.wsdot.wa.gov/tdm.

Announcements

WSDOT Offers Grants for Pedestrian and Bicycle Transportation Projects

Communities across the state have an opportunity to increase safety for bicyclists and pedestrians through two grant programs offering a total of \$14 million state and federal funds. Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety project grant applications are due to WSDOT on September 20, 2006. Applications for Safe Routes to School project grants are due to WSDOT on October 2, 2006, and are administered by the Highways and Local Programs division.

More information about these programs and the grant application process is available at:

Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Project - www.wsdot.wa.gov/TA/ProgMgt/Grants/Ped_Bike.htm

Safe Routes to Schools - www.wsdot.wa.gov/TA/ProgMgt/Grants/Safe_Routes.htm.

Get More Electronic Updates

The Public Transportation and Rail (PT&R) newsletter is just one of many electronic update services WSDOT offers. Several WSDOT projects and programs also provide e-mail updates, including Aviation, Ferries, the SR 520 Bridge and the Alaskan Way Viaduct.

Currently, the PT&R newsletter is delivered to more than 1,100 members and partners. Transit system managers receive the newsletter, as well as community transportation providers, city and county planners, and other interested parties.

To see which e-mail update lists are available and to subscribe, visit www.wsdot.wa.gov/Northwest/EmailUpdates.htm.

Upcoming Events

Agency Council on Coordinated Transportation Meeting

Friday, June 2

9:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Department of Transportation Building - Commission Board Room (1D2)

310 Maple Park Avenue SE

Olympia, WA

The Council will continue to focus on performance measurements. To confirm meeting times and locations, visit:

www.wsdot.wa.gov/acct/acct_meetings.htm.

Office of Transit Mobility Advisory Committee Meeting

Friday, June 9

10 a.m. to noon

Goldsmith Building - Urban Corridors Office

2nd Floor Conference Room

401 2nd Ave. South

Seattle, WA

The Office of Transit Mobility will hold its monthly Advisory Committee Meeting. The meeting is open to the public.

For more information visit: www.wsdot.wa.gov/transit/otm/ or call 206-464-1238.

Grants Program Advisory Committee (G-PAC)

Tuesday, June 13

10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

People for People

302 West Lincoln Avenue

Yakima, WA

The G-PAC Steering Committee will discuss the merits of formula and competitive distribution of the various state and federal grant programs. The Paratransit/Special Needs and Rural Mobility for Transit formulas will be evaluated on the basis of equity and program effectiveness.

Grants Program Advisory Committee (G-PAC)

Friday, June 23

10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Pierce Transit Training Center

Rainier Room

3720 96th Street SW

Lakewood, WA

Public transportation programs around the state rely on both capital and operating grants. The G-PAC Steering Committee will review the method of selecting operating and capital grant projects, and make recommendations for the 2007-2009 grant cycle.

Commute Trip Reduction Task Force

Friday, June 23

11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Location TBD

The agenda will focus on implementation of the Commute Trip Reduction Efficiency Act.

For information, contact Robin Hartsell at 360-705-7508 or hartser@wsdot.wa.gov.

WSDOT's 30th Annual Public Transportation Conference

Monday – Wednesday, August 14–16, 2006
DoubleTree Hotel
300 112th Avenue SE
Bellevue, WA

This 3-day state conference brings together 400 to 500 people dedicated to providing or supporting public transportation in Washington State. Attendees include public transportation providers, planners, and advocates as well as consulting firms, civic leaders, and suppliers of public transportation related products and services.

For more information, visit: www.wsdot.wa.gov/transit/conference.

17th National Rural Public and Intercity Bus Transportation Conference

Sunday–Wednesday, October 22–25, 2006
Skamania Lodge and Conference Center
Stevenson, WA

Held every two years, this national conference offers a valuable experience for rural transit and human service transit providers, tribal transit managers, planners, state agency staff, intercity bus operators, consultants, researchers and trainers—anyone who is interested in learning about the latest in best practices and current research in rural public and intercity bus transportation. For more information, visit: www.trbruralconference.org/.

The WSDOT Public Transportation and Rail Division prepares this monthly newsletter as a service to those interested in the activities of the division and its partners within the agency. For questions regarding newsletter articles, please contact Tonia Buell, Communications Manager, at buellt@wsdot.wa.gov or 360-705-7439.

To read previous issues or to subscribe, please visit www.wsdot.wa.gov/transit/ptr_newsletter/default.cfm.